

[Mr. Speaker]

[18th May 1954]

(2) In pursuance of Article 207, clause (3) of the Constitution of India, I, Sri Prakasa, Governor of Madras, hereby recommend to the Madras Legislative Assembly the consideration of the Madras Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments (Amendment) Bill, 1954.' "

(2) MESSAGES FROM THE COUNCIL.

MR. SPEAKER :—" I have also to announce to the House the following messages, dated 17th May 1954, received from the Hon. Chairman, Madras Legislative Council :—

' (1) In accordance with rule 111 of the Madras Council Rules, I transmit a copy of the Madras Preservation of Private Forests (Amendment) Bill, 1953 (L.A. Bill No. 23 of 1953), as passed and agreed to by the Council on the 17th May 1954 without any amendment and signed by me.

' (2) In accordance with rule 111 of the Madras Council Rules, I transmit a copy of the Madras Proprietary Estates' Village Service and Hereditary Village Offices (Amendment) Bill, 1954 (L.A. Bill No. 22 of 1954) as passed and agreed to by the Council on the 17th May 1954 without any amendment and signed by me.' "

III.—STATEMENT OF THE HON. THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION ON THE POLICY OF THE GOVERNMENT ON THE MODIFIED SCHEME OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION.

* THE HON. SRI C. SUBRAMANIAM :—" Mr. Speaker, I had given an assurance to this House that I would make a statement to-day regarding the policy of the Government with reference to Elementary Education. I stand here to fulfill that promise. Before I announce the Government's decision, I think it is necessary to place before this House the problems facing this Legislature and also the State and the country with reference to elementary education.

" In the past, education was the monopoly of a privileged few and as such, only a small percentage of the population had the benefit of this education and training. But now the conception has changed from imparting education and giving educational facilities to only a few to universal education—education to all our boys and girls and that has changed the entire concept and the content of the problem. Such a vast problem of imparting education to all the children could be undertaken only by the State, and only with State assistance, it could be achieved. What was purely a private effort in the past has now become a problem for the Government, a national problem so to say, and a Welfare State has to undertake this responsibility. Many of our great educationists have failed to grasp this change in the problem of education. The very concept of imparting education to a few and also the contents of the education have got to be different when that has got to be done on a nationwide scale. After a good deal of consideration, the framers of our Constitution had put it in Article 45 under the Directive Principles of the Constitution that it should be the responsibility of the State to give at least primary education to all our children and they have also placed a time-limit of ten years within which this target should be reached. Therefore, we are faced with this problem of giving education to all our children and that too, if

18th May 1954]

[Sri C. Subramaniam]

possible, within ten years which is only a directive principle. Apart from the directive principle, as representatives of the people as a whole, we owe a duty to all our children, boys and girls, to give them an opportunity to get all the facilities of education so that they may enjoy the fruits of the freedom which we have obtained. Therefore, apart from the Constitutional directive as a Legislature representing the entire people, we have got to face that problem. This problem in my view has got two aspects; the first aspect relates to financial and other resources available and the second, the content of education.

“ As far as the financial aspect is concerned, hon. Members, I am sure, are aware that the State Government as such are spending nearly Rs. 4½ crores on elementary education alone. This Rs. 4½ crores represents about 72.5 per cent of the entire expenditure on elementary education, five per cent being borne by private agencies and the balance of about 22.5 per cent being borne by local bodies. Therefore, the total elementary education budget as far as the entire State is concerned, will be round about Rs. 6 crores. By the spending of about Rs. 6 crores, we are educating nearly 50 per cent of our children and if we want to give education to the other 50 per cent also, it is necessary to think of the financial burden which we will have to undertake in that task. If we proceed on the mere basis of increasing the number of schools and putting in additional teachers who have got to be trained by establishing the necessary training schools, we will have to spend another Rs. 6 crores on teachers and teachers' salaries alone on the existing scale. If we take into account the buildings and other equipments which would be necessary for establishing these additional schools which as far as their number is concerned would mean an addition of 23,000 schools and a corresponding number of teachers, it is estimated that we would require another Rs. 10 to Rs. 12 crores as assistance from the State alone, apart from what the community as such would be contributing to putting up buildings and all those things. Whether with our existing resources, we would be able to face this financial problem is a thing which this House has got to ponder over before we finalise the scheme of elementary education which we will adopt and which will be suitable for our State. This Rs. 6 crores which we are spending does not take into account the scales of pay of elementary school teachers which, every hon. Member would admit, is really inadequate and needs a little addition at least. The increase of Rs. 3 which I gave to aided elementary school teachers alone has cost the Treasury about Rs. 19 lakhs. Therefore, hon. Members must understand that if only we attempt to give a reasonable salary to our teachers, I am sure the Bill would increase by another 5 crores of rupees per annum. It is only in that context we have to face this problem. Even though many hon. Members are aware of this, I thought that this was a fitting occasion when I should remind this House of the financial problem which we will have to face. Apart from that, we have to think of

[Sri C. Subramaniam]

[18th May 1954]

other things also. Apart from increasing the number of children who are attending schools, we have also to take into account the content of education and this is the second aspect of the problem. Not only is it important for us to give education to all our children, but it is important also to give them the right type of education. On this question, there is a great consensus of opinion that the system of elementary education as it prevailed till the year 1952-53 was in need of improvements. But what should be the change? What manner of change should be made? There has been a good deal of difference of opinion about it. Many definitions have been given of education, but there is no doubt that education in social setting consists in training young people to grow up in the ways and for the purposes approved by the grown-ups in society for the time being. A great deal of what we call culture is something that has to be taught afresh to each generation. A great deal of this learning is obtained by limitation without conscious instruction. But in what we call civilization, there are innumerable things in a purposeful way, the young have to be trained. It is because of the enormous diversity of views as to what our social purpose is that it has become exceedingly difficult to agree on a system of education. It is sometimes stated in a facile way that the western system of education is materialistic, but when we consider the desires of individual parents, we always find that the parents are always anxious that their boys should grow up so as to be able to earn wealth and acquire power. As against this, the great reform suggested by Gandhiji is basic education which visualises a somewhat different economic concept. Sometimes when people say that we are not making as much progress with basic education, they mean that the economic ideas which it contemplates have not been accepted and properly understood. This is a restricted sense in which basic education is understood. In a wider sense it is acceptance of the utility of the training that is given in the basic schools, viz., learning through activity. In our State, we have announced that it is our idea to convert all schools into basic schools. But it is not merely the numerical expansion. Whatever it is, I wish to say in this connexion that our progress in expansion of basic education has been slow. If we go into details, it will be clear that if the right type of basic education has to come into existence, its expansion will have to be slow and it has been very slow as it would be seen from the figures. Out of the 22,138 schools, we have been able to convert only 720 schools into basic schools. It has, therefore, become necessary to consider in what other direction immediate changes and improvements can be made. While we have accepted basic education as our elementary ideal and as it is likely to take time to achieve that ideal and the progress in that direction has been necessarily slow however much we may try to hasten, should we allow the present system of elementary education which existed up to 1953 to continue, as it was, without any changes, creating further complications and problems? Apart from improvements, there were two major defects which required to be considered. I would like

18th May 1954] [Sri C. Subramaniam]

to tell the House in this connexion that our industrial expansion is extremely limited, the opportunities for getting employment are equally limited. In fact, barring a few factories the only other paid employment in our country is what is usually described as a white collar job. One consequence of education in our country has been that every person who is educated seeks only 'white-collar job' and considers it beneath his dignity to undertake any other work even if it is available. In the result, we are, by the present system of education, adding every year to the unemployed or to the employable. It may be that this is not entirely the fault of the educational system. May be, there are many things to be done with regard to the economic arrangements in the country which would provide employment; but, it is nevertheless unfortunately true that the people become unemployed because of their education. Secondly, it is frequently stated that the social qualities and developments which our students develop are not only inadequate in themselves but get them out of harmony with the social environment of our State which mainly consists of villages. Therefore, if we have got to face this problem, we have to take into account several factors. Especially when we want to give universal education to all boys and girls, it should be a sort of education which would solve the problems of employment and it should not be an education which would increase unemployment because of the very nature of education imparted in our schools. It is only in that respect, Sir, we considered this aspect of elementary education and expanding elementary education so that all our boys and girls could get education and that too the proper type of education. A system of education had to be evolved which would be in harmony with the lives of our people. After all, after getting education, they are not going to live in a different world altogether; they have to live and work among the very same community. Therefore, the system of education should be such as would not make them to be in disharmony with the environment which exists in our country. As the environment is changing, perhaps the concept of education and the training could also be changed. But we have to face the existing problem. For the purpose of improving the very environment, we should give certain specialized training in the schools in which they are trained so that when these children come out of these schools and become citizens of society at a later date, the environment could change to a certain extent. Still, we cannot cut away from the community as such, we cannot cut away from the past immediately and we cannot create a heaven on earth. We cannot cut away from the present atmosphere and live in a completely different atmosphere. This is the problem which we have to face and this is the problem which has been attempted to be solved by the Father of the Nation by giving us basic education. That is the spirit of basic education. Therefore, to be in consonance with that spirit, we have to make the necessary change in the scheme of elementary education and the modified scheme of elementary education is only an attempt towards that end. It attempted to solve the

[Sri C. Subramaniam]

[18th May 1954]

problem of providing education to all our children by shift system, by giving a different concept of education and a different atmosphere, a different type of training and a different mental training and outlook to our children by the out-of-school programme. These are the problems which we wanted to solve by this scheme of education. How far it is capable of achieving that objective is quite a different matter. But the object of the modified scheme of elementary education which was introduced last year was towards that end only. If this object is understood properly, I am sure that much of the misunderstanding and prejudice which have grown around this scheme will vanish. Whether we accept the shift system to-day or not, if we are sincere in giving education to all our children, cent per cent of them, and if this object is to be accepted, I have absolutely no doubt everybody will have to support this shift system. We want to solve this problem, in my view, the only solution is in some form or other, we have to accept this shift system. Otherwise, we will have to keep out of school 50 per cent of our children who are not having any education and who are running about in the streets and fields to-day. And who are these children, boys and girls who are going without education? They are not children belonging to the higher strata of society, either by caste or by economic status. It is only the children of the lowly-placed persons, the poor peasants, the labourers, the Harijans and the Backward classes who are to-day going about without education. When we say we want to improve the lot of the Backward classes, the poor sections of the community, are we going to allow these children to go without education? Or are we going to tackle this problem effectively? So, this Legislature will have to take account of that aspect of the problem. If that is done, with reference not only to our financial resources, but also, resources of teaching personnel, I have absolutely no doubt that at some stage or other, we will have to accept this shift system. After all, the shift system was not discovered for the New Scheme of Elementary Education when that scheme was introduced. It has been there all along in our own State; it has been there in the Bombay State in the first two standards where there is compulsory education; it is there in the first five standards in Trivandrum even to-day. So the shift system is not a new thing which has been brought about in so far as the Modified Scheme of Elementary Education is concerned.

“ It is only with reference to the out-of-school programme that there has been a good deal of misunderstanding—I am prepared to admit that in many cases a good deal of sincere misunderstanding, even though in my humble view, it arose out of a certain amount of want of understanding. If we only analyse the out-of-school programme, we will find that it is nothing out of the way. It tried to tackle the problem of giving a craft mentality, a craft aptitude to the children. It has been criticized, ‘ how can young children do manual labour like this? ’ If only the critics study

18th May 1954] [Sri C. Subramaniam]

the actual scheme, they would have found that the children were not required to go and to do any manual work. It was intended only that the children should observe what others were doing.

“ Another criticism that has been levelled is that if craftsmen are allowed to mingle freely with children, the children would get spoiled. After all can we avoid the community and the society as such? Even supposing the children are in the school for five hours, it is not as if outside that time, they will not mix with their own parents who, we think, are using bad or vulgar language. Can we shut them all from society altogether? The problem has become different when we had accepted the idea of universal education. If it is only the privileged few who have got to get education, then they may have Gurukulams in secluded forests under Rishis and get their education there. So, if we reconcile ourselves to the idea of having only a certain class or classes educated—it may be based either on caste or it may be based upon economic considerations or any other considerations—if we reconcile ourselves to the idea of particular classes only getting education and education being confined to a few, of course, we can think of removing the children out of this atmosphere and environment, train them for 12 or 14 years and then bring them back to society to function as useful citizens. But when it is a question of giving education to all our children, we cannot ignore the community or society. We have to face it. That was why it was thought that it would not be harmful to bring the children into contact with regular craftsmen. On the other hand, it may better the craftsmen themselves in their manners to a certain extent and ultimately it would not have injured the children in any way.

“ Another very important objection—and if it is true it is really a valid objection—was that a potter's son was asked to learn only pottery, that is, only hereditary avocation was taught to the children and thus this was an attempt to perpetuate caste system. Unfortunately, this is a great misunderstanding. In spite of the assurances given. (Interruption from Opposition Benches.) I am only narrating the past—In spite of the assurances given, people were not prepared to believe that it did not contain any such compulsion. Further, my own hope was that it should be possible for children belonging to the so-called higher castes for example, the Brahmans, to learn a cobbler's job and to that extent this caste system which was based on the avocation carried on by particular persons would go and the professions or avocations as such will not have any dishonour or disgrace attached to them. My hope was that it would remove the stigma attached to particular professions by making other people, the supposed higher caste people, also to take to any job and that it would be the best way for abolishing caste system as such.

“ But perhaps it would be unnecessary at this stage for me to go further into the merits of the Modified Scheme. The fact of it is that in any system in a democratically constituted society, it

[Sri C. Subramaniam]

[18th May 1954]

is not only that the system by itself or the scheme by itself should be good, but that it should have the popular acceptance also, if it should succeed. If today, the Modified Scheme of Elementary Education has not succeeded, it is not because of the demerits in it. But I am prepared to say and I am convinced about it, that has failed because there was not the proper atmosphere to give it a fair trial. And I am prepared to go to the extent of saying that we have condemned it even without giving it a fair trial. That was all inevitable, and I will have to face the position as it stands today. In spite of the propaganda that we were able to do, it has not been possible to make the people as a whole accept it, even though there has been acceptance to a certain extent. I am prepared to admit that we have not been able to get that popular acceptance and that popular approval and popular co-operation which is necessary and which is essential for the success of any scheme. Therefore, the Government have to take note of that and that is why after a good deal of consideration and after consulting our own party and also after consulting the Leaders of the various other parties in the Legislature, the Government have taken a decision to give up the Modified Scheme of Elementary Education (cheers) and to introduce the old system of education which was in vogue prior to the introduction of the Modified Scheme of Elementary Education.

“ But the problem does not rest there, because we are all agreed that the old system needs improvement and that it has got to be changed. How that change has got to be effected will have to be considered.

“ In this connection, I may also answer another charge with reference to the Modified Scheme, namely, that this was introduced without reference to the Legislature. I would only request hon. Members to go into the past—not the past of 20 years or 50 years ago,—but the near past after the attainment of Freedom. Since 1946 very many radical changes, revolutionary changes in Secondary education and in College education, and in respect of languages have been introduced without reference to the Legislature. Therefore, if the previous Ministry did take any steps without first consulting the Legislature, it was in accord with the existing practice. But once the system is introduced, I do agree, the Legislature has a right to say and has got a duty to say whether they accept it or not, whether they find it good or whether they find it bad. All that criticism the Legislature is bound to make. But my respectful submission is that the charge against the previous Ministry of having departed from the conventions with regard to the introduction of any change in the scheme or system of education cannot stand scrutiny. We followed only the accepted procedure in introducing changes in the Educational system. But that is quite a different matter altogether.

18th May 1954]

[Sri C. Subramaniam]

“ I say that the Government are interested in seeing that a healthy and proper change should take place in the Elementary Education system and that it is absolutely necessary for the success of Secondary Education and also Collegiate Education. If a proper training and proper mental aptitude and atmosphere are not provided in the primary stage, we are not going to get it either in the secondary or in the collegiate stage. Therefore, it is necessary and especially when we are going to give education to all our children, it is very necessary to have the right type of elementary education. For this purpose, the Government have decided to take steps for the appointment of a committee to go into the entire system of elementary education and then make proposals so that they can be discussed and decided on in a calmer atmosphere and the necessary changes made in the system.

“ But apart from all this, I owe a personal explanation to the House and I must explain my own position with regard to the change that is taking place. The Congress Legislature Party met and in spite of various differences of opinion and differences in approach that were there in respect of the Modified Scheme of Elementary Education, after a full and frank discussion, unanimously decided that in order to create a proper atmosphere for introducing any new scheme, this Modified Scheme would be given up and the old system should come into effect again. They also decided that the system of elementary education should be examined *de novo* and whatever changes that were necessary should be brought into effect. I belong to that party and am a Minister here because I belong to that party. As long as I continue to be Minister, I am bound to obey the mandates given by that Party but in this case, it is not merely obedience to the mandates of the party but, personally speaking, there is a personal problem involved as I have great faith in the potentialities of the Modified Scheme. I not only have great faith in it but I have laid great emphasis in all the speeches I have made with reference to elementary education. Personally it is very difficult for me to decide, as far as this change is concerned, whether I should continue to accept the mandate of the party or I should take any other decision. For the last few days, I have had a good deal of heart-searching and I have spent a few sleepless nights also. And I must confess that I am still groping in the dark and have not seen light. I may mention this to this Hon. House that even though it is purely personal to a certain extent this House also is interested in it because I am responsible to this House and am bound to tell the House what is passing in my mind. That is why I thought that it would be quite unfair to myself and to the House to make merely a statement on behalf of the Government and leave my personal position unexplained. As I have already said, I am still groping in the dark. But whatever be my decision, it will be purely an individual decision and it will not and should not affect the progress of our nation. My only hope is

[Sri C. Subramaniam] [18th May 1954]

that we would choose the correct path and having chosen that correct path, we should proceed undaunted whatever be the difficulties in the way. My only prayer and sincere prayer is that we should have the wisdom to choose the correct path and having chosen it, my further prayer would be that we should have the courage and the perseverance to follow that path however difficult and weary it may be. I may assure this Hon. House that whatever may be my personal position with regard to this and whatever position I may occupy in future, I will continue to place my services at the disposal of this House so that as a result of our united effort, our State, our Nation, our people and our children may progress in the right direction." (Cheers.)

SRI M. KALYANASUNDRAM :—" We would like to have a debate on this."

MR. SPEAKER :—" Now? We have got two small Bills which the Government want should be referred to a Select Committee. We can finish consideration of these Bills so that meanwhile the Leader of the House and the leaders of various parties may have consultations and come to a decision as to whether we should have one hour or two hours today for the debate or whether we can have it some other day. Shall I take it that the House wants to take up the Bills first? What has the Deputy Leader of the Opposition got to say? "

9-30
a.m.

SRI M. KALYANASUNDRAM :—" We shall take up the Bills today and we shall have the debate to-morrow."

DR. K. B. MENON :—" The suggestion is good because it will give us an opportunity to discuss the subject thoroughly. A full day may be given for the discussion of the statement."

SRI S. PANCHAKSHARAM CHETTIAR :—" Sir, the other day a categorical statement was made that after the statement of the Hon. the Minister for Education there need not be any debate at all if the scheme was to be withdrawn. He has made a statement categorically withdrawing the Modified Scheme. Why should there be a debate? "

MR. SPEAKER :—" The Speaker is not responsible. I remember to have told the House on that day that if the House wanted a debate, I would not stand in the way. If the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and leaders of various parties want a debate I shall allow it. Obviously they want it and I have allowed a debate. I cannot press them not to have it! "

SRI V. BALAKRISHNAN :—" I do not know what the need is for a *post mortem* debate."

18th May 1954]

MR. SPEAKER:—"The hon. Member has not understood me. What I said was that there were two Bills before the House which could be taken up first and that meanwhile leaders of parties might come to me to decide whether there should be a debate. I shall not allow any more discussion on this."

IV.—GOVERNMENT BILLS.

(1) THE MADRAS IRRIGATION (LEVY OF BETTERMENT CONTRIBUTION) BILL, 1954.

THE HON. SRI M. A. MANICKAVELU NAICKER:—"Sir, I beg to introduce the Madras Irrigation (Levy of Betterment (Contribution) Bill a, 1954 and move—

'That the Bill be referred to a Select Committee.'

I shall give the names of Members later. In making this Motion, I would like to bring to the notice of the House that the Government have been constructing, expanding or altering a large number of irrigation and drainage works. The Government are consequently being put to a large extra expenditure. On the other hand, the works have secured to the owners of the lands either an increased or an assured supply of water to their lands. It has given varying degrees of benefit to various owners of land as a result of which the capital value of the land has increased. It is only reasonable that the Government should be enabled to recover from the owners so benefited a share of the increase in the capital value of the land. In many cases the Government have also been announcing their intention of levying betterment contributions while sanctioning irrigation or drainage schemes. A Bill called the Madras Irrigation (Levy of Betterment Contribution) Bill, 1952 was introduced in the Legislative Assembly in June 1952 and referred to a Select Committee of the Legislative Assembly.

"In August 1952, the Select Committee, however, reported that the Bill need not be proceeded with. In April 1954, the Government appointed a Cabinet Sub-Committee to scrutinize the provisions of the Bill. The Cabinet Sub-Committee considered the Bill and suggested modifications to the Bill in several aspects. The Government have decided to introduce the Bill with the modifications suggested by the Cabinet Sub-Committee. They have accordingly brought forward a revised Bill called the Madras Irrigation (Levy of Betterment Contribution) Bill, 1954.

"This Bill enables the Government to recover betterment contribution from the holders of lands which are benefited by the construction, expansion or alteration of any irrigation or drainage work from 1st January 1947. The lands under each

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